THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir. All the ten inhabited tribal and backward villages of Lakshadweep Island have been provided with telephone facilities including STD/ISD/FAX etc.

(b) Location-wise details where telephone facilities are available are as under:-

Sl. No.	Name of Location
1.	Agathy
2.	Amini
3.	Androth
4.	Bitra
5.	Chetlet
6.	Kadamath
7.	Kalpeni
8.	Kavarathy
9.	Kiltan
10.	Minicoy

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Blocking of WLL calls

1732. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Cellular Mobile Service Providers (CMSPs) have justified to Government for their action of blocking WLL calls during January-March, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the CMSPs have also urged Government to withdraw criminal proceedings against them in lieu of restoring WLL calls and if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Sir, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on behalf of the CMSPs have addressed Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on this issue and the details are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) Sir, the criminal proceedings against the CMSPs were started by the TRAI. these proceedings have not been withdrawn because the justifications furnished by the CMSPs for blocking WLL calls and for violating TRAI's directive have not been found to be tenable. However, the CMSPs have already filed an appeal in Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) against TRAI's decision to initiate criminal proceedings and the mater is *sub-judice.*

Statement

Details of COAI's Representation

COAI *vide* their letter No. TVR/COAI/053 had represented that the Cellular Operators were forced to take the decision of blocking transit calls,under the circumstances then prevailing purely as a defensive measure and to protect their legitimate interest as operators. COAI had mentioned that their action was based on the principles of equity and for the establishment of a level-playing field. COAI had further mentioned that they were not informed even about the contents of the complaints nor were given an opprotunity to explain their stand before the issue of directive. In view of the failure of WLL (Mobile) operators to enter into interconnect agreement for direct connectivity on the basis of reciprocity, the 'Global System for Mobile communications' (GSM) opeators were left with no other choice but to block transit calls. COAI had also mentioned that despite their repeated requests, there was no Inter-Connect Usage Charge (IUC) introduced when the incident took place. Had there been an IUC regime inplace, such incidents might have been avoided.

COAI had further mentioned that during that period there was no "existing interconnection link" between the networks of concerned WLL Operators and the Cellular Operators in the respective Telecom Circles. Further, there was no tripartite agreement between Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)/Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) WLL (Mobile) opeators and the Cellular Operators. COAI had further mentioned that as per the interconnect agreement between BSNL/MTNL and the Cellular

Operators, the existing link was to be used only for calls originating from any of the BSNL's Network and terminating into the Cellular Operator's Network and *vice-versa*. This link was never established for trasiting calls from any other Network unless mutually agreed between BSNL and CMSP.

2. COAI had also mentioned that during the same period, MTNL, Delhi blocked calls from cellular operators to fixed phones and *vice versa*. However, to their knowledge no action was initiated against MTNL for their said action even though it was widely known that such blockings (in Delhi) were not due to 'technical problems'.

3. COAI had assured that they deeply respect and acknowledge the authority of the Telecom Regulator, particularly in matters relating to interconnection and that they were and remain fully committed to ensuring smooth and fair interconnections between all operators. COAI had further mentioned that it is imperative that all the participants in this telecom industry, be it the incumbents, the Private Operators or Department of Telecom as well as regulator, encourage and evelop mutual respect and trust in each other rather than having prolonged and acrinominus litigation which could become road blocks for rapid development of this sector. In view of the above COAI had requested the Authority to take a considerate view of the entire issue and withdraw any such prosecution proceedings. In their view, any such prosecution proceedings will have an adverse impact on the reputations of the Indian companies in International markets and also impact relationships with foreign partners.

Mobile and internet users

1733. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of tele-density during the last two years, State-wise; and

(b) the details of mobile and internet users during the last two years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The details of tele-density for the last two years, State-wise are given in the Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) The details regarding Mobile and Internet users for the last two years, State-wise are given in the Satement II and III respectively.